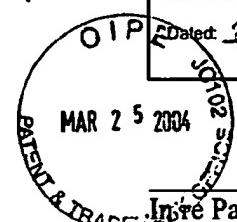


I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as Express Mail, Airbill No. EV336624332US, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date shown below.

Dated: 3/23/04 Signature: Tia Zimmerman
(Tia B. Zimmerman)

Docket No.: 373722001822
(PATENT)
Client Ref. A007 CIP3



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:

Edwin FONTECHA and Mohammad Z. KHAN

Application No.: 09/904,163

Art Unit: 2874

Filed: July 11, 2001

Examiner: M. Connelly-Cushwa

For: APPARATUS AND METHOD TO
VERTICALLY ROUTE AND CONNECT
MULTIPLE OPTICAL FIBERS

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. SECTION 1.114

Mail Stop RCE
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

This Request for Continued Examination and Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action dated September 25, 2003 (Paper No. 0903), for which a response was due on December 25, 2003. Filed herewith is a Petition and fee for a 3 month extension of time, thereby extending the deadline for response to March 25, 2004. Accordingly, this response is timely filed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims, as amended, in light of the amendment and remarks presented herein are respectfully requested.